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**Recommendations on Township
Government**

• • • ARTHUR W. BROMAGE

With a foreword by John A. Fairlie

Report No. 3 of the Committee on County Government
of the National Municipal League

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Foreword

This report presents a further series of recommendations by committees on county government of the National Municipal League. Preceding this there have been submitted a proposed bill for a county manager law, a report on constitutional provisions on local government, by Howard P. Jones, recommendations for constitutional provisions on local government, and a report on Principles of a Model County Government, by R. C. Atkinson.¹

As in the case of previous reports, this is based on the work of the chairman of a sub-committee—in this instance, Professor Arthur W. Bromage of the University of Michigan. But, like other reports, this has been the subject of careful consideration and discussion at several meetings of the committee, including a meeting given mainly to this subject held in Philadelphia in December 1933; and the report has been approved by the committee as a whole.

In this report there is considered the problem of the township, as found in the Middle Atlantic and North Central States, as a general unit of local government. Criticism of the township in its various aspects and functions are presented, objections to its abolition are considered, and a series of recommendations for its gradual elimination are submitted.

JOHN A. FAIRLIE, *Chairman*

¹NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, August 1930, Vol. 19, No. 8; August 1932, Vol. 21, No. 8; September 1933, Vol. 22, No. 9. A Model State Constitution, revised edition, February 1933.



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Recommendations on Township Government

Report No. 3 of the
Committee on County
Government of the
National Municipal
League

ARTHUR W. BROMAGE

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TOWNSHIP government as it exists in the Middle Atlantic and North Central States is a factor in the reorganization of local government. Its area is generally too small for the proper financial support and efficient administration of governmental functions. Its governmental structure, like that of the county, is antiquated. On the other hand, township government is defended as a training school of democracy. No absolute solution of the problem is at hand, and no single solution will hold true for every state in which the township exists.

This report deals with the organized civil township in the Middle Atlantic States and in the Middle West. It does not apply to town government in New England. The differences between town government in New England and township government in the Middle West are so fundamental that the former is not within the scope of this analysis. The township as an organized political unit is found, with varying powers and functions, generally in Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. But in other states township organization is not general. In Illinois seventeen counties in the southern and central section have no township organization. In Oklahoma, less than one-half of the counties have organized township governments; in

Nebraska, less than one-third; in Missouri, less than one-fourth. In North Dakota approximately one-fourth of the rural area of the state is not organized into civil townships; and in South Dakota townships in some counties serve only as school districts.

I. OBJECTIONS TO THE TOWNSHIP

The objections to the retention of township government are many. There is evidence that the township places a burden on the taxpayer for which there is no commensurate return in services rendered. The major functions of government essential in the rural areas cannot be maintained economically and efficiently by township units. This fact has been recognized in many states by the gradual transfer of functions from townships to counties. In the administration of justice, health and welfare, highways, and finance, the township is no longer a satisfactory unit. Further, the use of the township as a district for selecting representatives on the county board is open to serious criticism. Finally, the township is an artificial area which does not conform necessarily to trade or community areas.

A. As an Unnecessary Burden on the Taxpayer

The first problem is whether or not the township places an unnecessary burden on the taxpayer. In Illinois, where some counties have township organiza-

tion and others do not, comparisons between counties with and without township government are available. A study has been made by H. S. Hicks, chief clerk of the Illinois Tax Commission, based upon taxes levied in 1931 for general governmental purposes, other than schools and highways, in eleven counties without and seven counties with township organization. He found the per capita cost of government in the counties without townships to be \$1.84, whereas in the counties with townships it was \$3.83.

Another study of the costs of township and county government in Illinois was made by M. H. Hunter of the Bureau of Business Research of the University of Illinois. After making comparative studies of counties with and without townships, he observed that, "The general indication, from the comparisons made, is that township organization adds to the cost of government without the addition of a commensurate service."

Similar conclusions were reached in a study of township government in Michigan. There, a report to the Michigan Commission of Inquiry into County, Township, and School District Government in 1933 held that, "The township has become an unnecessary and hence a costly and wasteful unit of government all of whose functions can be as well or better performed on a county basis. . . . It is extremely detrimental to the interests of the local taxpayer to maintain an institution whose costs are largely for overhead and little for service."

Likewise, the 1933 report of the New York State Commission for the Revision of the Tax Laws on *Depression Taxes and Economy through Reform of Local Government* maintained with respect to highways, education, health, welfare, justice, taxation, and finance: "Evidence before this commission shows conclusively that under modern conditions the

administration of these functions cannot be maintained efficiently and economically by many existing town, village, and special district units in rural areas particularly. . . . The time has long since passed in this state when these highly important public services can be left so largely to the supervision or control of town and village governments, so many of which are incompetent financially and otherwise to deal adequately with them."

B. As a Unit for the Administration of Justice

The policy of using townships as districts for the election of justices of the peace is of long standing. The number of justices thus created is too large. With little exception the justices lack professional qualifications for the judicial office which they are to perform. Bruce Smith in *Rural Crime Control* notes that the experiments among the states "show a generally uniform tendency towards reducing the number of justices, increasing their compensation, raising their qualifications, and extending their territorial jurisdiction." These desirable ends cannot be achieved by use of the township as a district for electing justices.

Reports from Virginia indicate that an appointed single trial justice for a county is a distinct advance over the election of justices of the peace from a district smaller than the county. The Virginia Commission on County Government reported to the legislature in 1931 that counties using a single trial justice found this system a marked improvement over the old magistrates' courts. We recommend that states now electing township justices of the peace establish in their place one or more appointive trial justices in counties.

C. As a Unit for Health and Welfare Administration

To the administration of public health and welfare the township is not suited.

During the past two decades there has been an extensive campaign for county health units. On January 1, 1931, there were 557 full-time county health departments in operation in rural areas. These county health units were located in 38 states and provided service for approximately 28 per cent of the rural population. The use of townships as health districts increases the cost of administrative overhead, promotes overlapping of effort, and creates too many part-time and inexpert health officers. Efficient public health work requires a trained personnel and whole-time service. These two factors require the use of a larger unit than the township for public health work. As a general rule, of our existing governmental units, the county or a combination of counties is the most logical territorial basis for health administration. We regard the county health unit as a more effective agency in public health administration and we consider the township obsolete as a health unit.

Where the township serves as an area for welfare administration, it is used ordinarily in outdoor poor relief work, while institutional care of the poor is maintained by the county. We favor the centralization of outdoor poor relief as well as institutional care under county administration. We recommend for the average rural county a combined department of health and welfare administration with a single executive head and an advisory board. Such a department should control public health work, administer all forms of poor relief, and operate hospitals, charitable, and correctional institutions.

D. As a Unit for Highway Administration

The utilization of the township in the Middle Atlantic and North Central States for the construction and maintenance of minor roads is contrary to the prevailing use of the county road unit in the south and far west. The township as a unit of highway adminis-

tration produces a multiplicity of agencies, prevents maximum efficiency in the operation of road machinery, and promotes non-professional management. Evidence of the trend away from the township highway district is furnished by Michigan, where a gradual transfer of township highways to county road units is mandatory within a five-year period. The recent transfer of county roads to state administration in North Carolina and Virginia indicates that the choice of the future may be between a single state highway unit on the one hand, and on the other, a combination of state highway system and county road units. Therefore, we recommend the transfer of existing township highway systems to county road units. We urge that road administration in the county be placed under a unifunctional department of public works with a single executive director.

E. As a Unit for the Administration of Fiscal Functions

Fiscal functions which townships often perform are the assessment of property for taxation, the collection of taxes, and the keeping of financial records. Scientific assessment of property values requires an expert personnel. Whether the assessment of property should be a state or a county function is not our concern here, but it is clear that it should not be administered by township governments. Where the township is retained as a governmental unit, in spite of the objections to it, we recommend that the assessment of property for taxation, the collection of township and other taxes, the custody and disbursement of township funds, and the keeping of financial records should be under a county department of finance with a single executive head. Assessment of property, tax collection, custody and disbursement of public funds cannot be economically and efficiently performed by elective officials

holding short terms of office in a multiplicity of small rural units.

F. As a Unit for the Administration of Miscellaneous Functions

This is also true of a number of miscellaneous functions which townships perform. The minor clerical functions of the township, such as the keeping of chattel mortgage records, could be as well or better performed by the county. Nor is the township with its rigid boundaries satisfactory as a unit for the conduct of elections. A more flexible arrangement would be a system of electoral precincts under the control of the county board. Moreover, county election administration should promote a more effective supervision of the conduct of elections.

G. As a Representative Unit

The township is still a unit of representation upon the county board of supervisors in New York, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. But seventeen counties in Illinois have a board of county commissioners, and a few of the counties in Wisconsin have taken advantage of a statutory option to set up small county boards. Township representation upon county boards is analogous to ward representation upon city councils. It produces large and unwieldy boards, promotes the election of small-calibre members, accentuates local interests and pork-barrel tactics, and increases the cost of administration in county government. It generally results in an unequal representation of groups in county government, and sharpens the urban-rural conflict in urban and suburban counties. An aggregation of urban and township supervisors is not an effective agency for determining policy. Many municipal councils and school boards have been reduced in size, and election at large has become a common practice. No fundamental difference exists between the function of the governing boards in these units of govern-

ment. All three should be representative bodies for the determination of policies, leaving execution thereof to a chief executive. We recommend the abolition of the township as a unit of representation on county boards. For the selection of county boards we favor the Hare system of proportional representation, and as a second best, majority election at large by nonpartisan ballot.

H. As an Artificial Area

Another objection to the township is that it does not conform to trade or community areas. In New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and eastern Ohio townships vary considerably in area and are irregular in form. In the Middle West the boundaries of the civil townships generally follow the congressional townships which are thirty-six square miles in area. In sparsely settled areas civil townships often combine two or more congressional townships. In many cases civil townships have little relation to actual community areas. That townships, because of the rigidity of their boundaries, do not correspond to community areas, has been ably demonstrated by such studies as that of C. R. Wasson and Dwight Sanderson on the *Relation of Community Areas to Town Government in the State of New York*. The importance of townships has been diminished by the separate incorporation of villages and small cities that have grown up within or overlapping township boundaries. This has been contrary to the policy in New England towns where the separate incorporation of village governments has been the exception rather than the rule.²

²The artificial nature of the township area and the conflict between village and township governments has led to the advocacy of a new unit to be known as a rural municipality. In *Rural Municipalities*, Theodore B. Manny suggests the revamping of the township to correspond more closely to the New England town. The rural municipality would conform more to trade areas, and it would combine both existing incorporated areas and open-country areas into a single unit. But

The forces operating to undermine township government are apparent. Because townships generally included an arbitrary area of thirty-six square miles, the tendency was to incorporate as villages or cities the actual communities which developed. This practice seriously impaired the vitality of the township as a political unit. Because townships were small in area, they had insufficient population and valuation to support major functions of local administration. Finally, the development of means of transportation and communication made feasible the use of much larger units for the administration of governmental functions in rural regions. Gradually, functions have been transferred from townships to counties until in some states township government is nothing but a hollow shell.

II. OBJECTIONS TO TOWNSHIP ELIMINATION

The most common objection to abolition of the township is that it has been and continues to be a training school of democracy. Although a larger unit might administer functions more efficiently, it is said that this advantage would be offset by a decline in local interest which now centers in township government. This objection to the abolition of townships assumes that civic interest now centered in township affairs would not be transferred to the county unit. Interest in township government has already waned in many states, except on the part of office-holders and other special groups. In sparsely settled regions a large proportion of residents must of necessity hold township offices. One family may hold several positions. This creates a situation which

because certain services needed in villages would not be available to residents in the open country, a system of zoned taxation would be used. This proposal is further evidence of the artificial character of existing township units.

we regard as highly undesirable. Ohio, for example, has 23 townships whose rural population exclusive of incorporated communities was less than 100 by the 1930 census. Michigan has 39 townships in the same category.

In Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri the township meeting does not exist. Even in those states in which the laws still provide for the township meeting as a deliberative assembly, inquiries made by John A. Fairlie have indicated that attendance is in most cases meager compared with the attendance in New England. The presence of incorporated villages removes from the township meeting important problems of local government, and the minor problems which remain do not arouse widespread or active public interest. There is further evidence of waning interest in township government. Citizens sometimes refuse to run for office or, if elected, do not take the oath and thereby fail to qualify. This is particularly true with respect to the office of justice of the peace.

In view of these facts, this committee does not believe that the retention of existing township units is essential to the maintenance of local interest in government. Interest in government springs from fundamental motives that are not necessarily present in a small unit and absent in a larger one. Furthermore, a number of overlapping governments—township, village, and county—in the same area tends to dissipate public interest.

III. PROPOSALS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE TOWNSHIP

The township is no longer a satisfactory organization for the administration of local services. We therefore recommend that steps be taken for its elimination. If local interest in township government is strong in certain sections of a

state, concessions should be made to the principle of local or county option in township organization. We recommend the following methods of township elimination:

A. Wherever legally possible under existing constitutional provisions, we recommend that legislatures provide definite plans for the gradual transfer of functions from the township to the county, city, or state. If constitutional barriers to such legislation exist, we favor a constitutional amendment permitting the legislature to transfer functions from townships to the county, city, or state.

B. We favor legislation permitting individual townships to be disorganized or to be consolidated. Minnesota, for example, by act of 1931 permits towns to request dissolution by a vote of the electors at annual or special meetings. The county board may then dissolve the town and by resolution attach it to an organized town or govern it as unorganized territory of the county. If such dissolved territory is to be added to an adjoining town, the proposal must first receive a five-eighths majority of the voting electors of the town to which the territory is to be added. The general statutes of Minnesota relating to the county board give this body power to govern unorganized territory. Under such a plan provision should be made for the liquidation of existing debt and the levy of special taxes within such an area.

C. We also recommend the abolition of townships by county option. As illustrative of this practice the constitutional provisions of Illinois, Missouri, and Nebraska are herewith cited:

Illinois, *Constitution*, Art. IX, sec. 5: "... And in any county that shall have adopted a township organization, the question of continuing the same may be submitted to a vote of the electors of such county, at a general election, in the manner that now

is or may be provided by law; and if a majority of all the votes cast upon that question shall be against township organization, then such organization shall cease in said county; and all laws in force in relation to counties not having township organization, shall immediately take effect and be in force in such county. . . ."

Missouri, *Constitution*, Art. IX, sec. 9: "In any county which shall have adopted 'township organization,' the question of continuing the same may be submitted to a vote of the electors of such county at a general election, in the manner that shall be provided by law, and if a majority of all the votes cast upon that question shall be against township organization, it shall cease in said county; and all laws in force in relation to counties not having township organization shall immediately take effect and be in force in such county."

Nebraska, *Constitution*, Art. IX, sec. 5: "... In any county that shall have adopted a township organization the question of continuing the same may be submitted to a vote of the electors of such county at a general election in the manner that shall be provided by law."

Such constitutional provisions permit a dual system of local government. Some counties operate with and some without township organization. This is a handy method of township elimination. It is better than requiring every county in a state to have townships, regardless of whether the people in the region want or need them.

D. Where state constitutions provide for the organization of county and township governments, we recommend constitutional amendments permitting county home rule charters and empowering the state legislature to set up optional plans of county organization. We recommend further that such constitutional amendments authorize counties by home rule charter and the state legislature by optional law plans, to provide for the discontinuance of the organized

townships within a county, and the transfer of any or all of the powers now exercised by townships or township officers to officers of the county or state. We recommend particularly the policy embodied in the 1933 Ohio amendment for county reorganization, which authorizes townships to transfer powers to the county. This amendment states that: "Municipalities and townships shall have authority, with the consent of the county, to transfer to the county any of their powers or to revoke the transfer of any such power under regulations provided by general law, but the rights of initiative and referendum shall be se-

cured to the people of such municipalities or townships in respect of every measure making or revoking such transfer, and to the people of such county in respect of every measure giving or withdrawing such consent."

We have made no recommendations for the reorganization of the governmental structure of townships since we favor the elimination of this unit rather than its continuation with a revamped governmental structure. However, since the abolition of townships will probably be a gradual process, we urge the immediate consolidation of townships in sparsely settled areas.



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Election Administration in Michigan
An Exploratory Study

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University of Michigan

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Election Administration in Michigan

An
Exploratory
Study

JAMES KERR POLLOCK

University of Michigan

For generations the administration of elections in the state of Michigan has been a neglected field. Beginning with 1929, however, noticeable improvements in Michigan's election system have been marked up to the credit of recent legislatures. First of all, the legislature in 1929 adopted a system of permanent registration for those cities and villages of the state with populations of over five thousand persons, and also provided for the elimination of the names of presidential electors from the ballot.¹ Secondly, in 1931, the legislature enacted numerous changes in the election laws, among which were the following: Decentralization of recounts, abolition of the presidential primary, amendment of the recall statute, centralization of control over elections in the office of the secretary of state, change in the personnel of boards of county canvassers, clarification of the provisions relating to the counting of ballots and several other less important changes.² These modifications resulted from recommendations which were made by two special commissions on elections, one appointed by Governor Green and the other appointed by

Governor Brucker.³ These commissions studied the administration of Michigan elections and found many provisions in need of improvement. These two investigations, however, did not have the time to delve very deeply into election administration for they were concerned primarily with legislation rather than administration.

Under the powers granted to him in the election laws, the secretary of state, Frank D. Fitzgerald, for the first time in the history of the state authorized, in 1932, a survey to be made of certain phases of election administration throughout the whole state with the primary purpose of ascertaining the cost of elections.

Pursuant to this authorization, information has been assembled from all parts of the state and the facts thus secured have been compiled, subjected to close scrutiny and analysis, and are now presented herewith, together with certain conclusions and recommendations which are suggested by them.⁴

³The first commission consisted of Dennis Alward, Edward Frensdorff, and Roy Brownell. The second commission's members were Claude Stevens, Vernon Brown, Mrs. Dorothy Judd, Clarke Brown, Oakley Distin, John T. Caswell, and James K. Pollock.

⁴I am greatly indebted to a group of my students in my course in political parties and electoral problems for giving me indispensable assistance in compiling the data on which this report is based.

¹Session Laws of Michigan, 1929, Act No. 306.

²Session Laws of Michigan, 1931, Acts Nos. 113, 114, and 200.

II

A few words are necessary concerning the extent of the survey and the nature of the problem. The Michigan election system is highly decentralized. Every county, city, township, and village has its own set of election authorities, and elections in these various units are conducted quite independently and without much interference from outside authorities. The various county clerks supply the ballots and other election supplies for all state and national elections. Local officials handle their own local elections and also attend to supplying election officials and the whole paraphernalia of elections for state and national elections, whenever they occur. But there is no system of accounting or reporting to one central authority, as, for instance, to the county clerk, so that one can get a complete picture of election administration in the various counties. County clerks have no supervisory power over local election officials in their respective counties such as is possessed by county boards of elections and county clerks in other states.

Returns in state elections are canvassed in the counties and transmitted to the secretary of state, but no cost figures of elections are supplied to any one official in any county nor to any state official, and in order to ascertain the cost of a state-wide election it has been necessary to collect figures from as many as possible of the 1,800 county, township, village, and city clerks throughout the state. This has been a task of enormous proportions and of great difficulty but, after twelve months of effort, returns were received from a sufficient number of units to make the survey complete and representative of the whole state.

Information was requested from all election authorities concerning a variety of subjects which pertained to the

primary and general election of 1932. Data for earlier elections were not available. In fact, it was very difficult to secure the data for 1932 alone, even though but a few months had passed since the elections of that year. No attempt has been made to secure figures of the costs of purely local elections, for instance, city, village, and special elections. What is presented, therefore, is not a complete picture of the total cost of elections for a whole year but merely of the total cost of two state-wide elections, namely, the primary and general election of 1932. It would be interesting to have complete figures for all of the election costs of 1932, but the labor required to collect such material can well be saved under present circumstances. In fact, it would have been well-nigh impossible to collect such data. Sufficient figures are here presented to give a good picture of the cost of elections to Michigan citizens. It is a curious fact that never before have the people of the state been so informed on this important phase of public administration.

III

The state of Michigan is divided into 83 counties, 149 cities, 322 villages, and 1,267 townships. Data were received from all of the counties, 129 of the cities, 179 of the villages, and 789 of the townships, making a total of 1,176 returns which were sent in to the secretary of state. This represents 64.4 per cent of all the local governing units of the state. It also represents 88.4 per cent of the total population of the state, or approximately 4,280,000 out of the 4,842,000 persons in the state. It can thus be seen that, although many of the smaller and unimportant units of the state have not complied with the requests made on three different occasions by the secretary of state, nevertheless the returns which have been received are

abundant enough and representative enough to permit of sound conclusions. All of the county clerks furnished the necessary figures of county expenditures and most of the clerks of the principal cities, villages, and townships, also complied with the desires of the secretary of state for information.

It should be noted that of the 1,176 returns which were furnished, approximately 10 per cent were not usable because of patent inaccuracies, significant omissions, or because of their incompleteness. This fact constitutes quite a commentary on the way in which election matters are handled by local officials. The request was made to every township, village, city and county clerk in the state by the secretary of state under the authority of Part I, Chapter 2 of the Michigan election laws by which the secretary of state "shall have the power and it shall be his duty (7) to require such reports from the local election officials as may be deemed necessary." Incidentally, it can be said that any number of local officials expressed resentment at being asked to furnish information, and several of them requested reimbursement for the labor (?) expended in furnishing the information.

IV

From the returns the following total figures of the cost of the 1932 primary and general election emerge:

Expenditures of the secretary of state (cannvassing, printing, postage and supplies) ...	\$ 500.00
Expenditures of the counties (ballots, supplies, recounts, etc.) .	235,849.13
Expenditures for registration of voters (estimated)	302,790.00 ⁵

⁵These figures are on the basis of 100 per cent. Actual returns represent 88.4 per cent

Expenditures for all other purposes (pay of election officers, rent of polling places, etc.)	568,346.36 ⁵
Total	\$1,107,485.49

The total vote cast in these two elections for the office of governor was 2,663,379. Therefore, these two state-wide elections cost the people of Michigan 41.5 cents per vote cast. There are 1,987,582 registered voters in the state of Michigan. Therefore, the cost per registered voter for these two elections was 55.7 cents. There were 3,417 election precincts in the state of Michigan in 1932 and the cost, therefore, per election precinct was \$324.11 for these two general elections or \$162.05 per precinct for each election.

It should be remembered that these figures are for two state-wide elections occurring in the fall of a presidential year. It is obvious that the cost per voter in other elections is considerably higher, for more votes are regularly cast in state-wide fall elections than in spring elections, or in local elections, and, as will be shown later, costs vary little from election to election regardless of the vote cast.

Due to the inseparability, as between primary and general elections, of several items, as for instance registration, it is not possible to present exact figures showing the total costs of each of the primary and the general election. However, the figures show an expenditure for the pay of election officers and the rent of polling places to be:

Primary election	\$277,005.19
General election	291,341.17

The expenditures of county clerks for ballots likewise may be presented of the state's population and the estimated figures above are calculated from the figures collected.

for the primary and general elections separately. These figures are:

Primary election	\$69,646.00
General election	80,058.38

There is not, therefore, any great difference in the costs of these two state-wide elections. The primary is slightly less expensive than the general election.

V

The figures showing the total cost of elections can now be itemized and discussed in detail. Registration will first be presented. It is interesting to point out that heretofore figures have not been compiled showing the number of registered voters in the state. Prior to 1931 township clerks were required to certify and transmit to the county clerk of their county a true copy of the contents of the registration books of the various townships. Since this requirement was eliminated in 1931, no such lists have been filed and no regular means has existed by which registration figures could be secured for the state as a whole. Registration figures are regularly collected and published for their respective states by the secretary of state of New York and by the secretary of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. But this is not required in Michigan.

From the data supplied by election authorities it has been possible to make an accurate estimate of the number of registered voters in Michigan. This estimate shows that in 1932 there were 1,987,582 registered voters in the state. The population of Michigan according to the census of 1930 was 4,842,325. Therefore, 41 per cent of the total population of the state was registered for voting. The population twenty-one years old and over in 1932 was 2,939,409. This means that 67.6 per cent of the persons of voting age were registered.

The year 1932 represented a great step in advance in the matter of registration, for in this year under a statute enacted in 1929 a new system of permanent registration was installed in all cities and villages of over 5,000 population. It is of considerable interest and value, therefore, to present the figures showing the cost of a complete re-registration of the voters of the state of Michigan.

In 1932 the returns show that 138 local governing units prepared new registration books. That is to say, under the law, in communities of less than 5,000 persons, the old-fashioned registration books are still used. New ones are not prepared until the old ones are so out of date as to be misleading, or so "worn, soiled, or marked that in the judgment of the township or city clerk a new registration book for such precinct is necessary or desirable." The total cost of new registration books in these 138 units was \$2,382.31. It is rather curious that so few new registration books were prepared, for it is notorious that hundreds of the registration books now in use are many years old, and are in great need of change. Investigation discloses scores of townships where registration records are quite useless, and several other townships where registration books are not regularly used.

On the other hand, 12 villages (five with populations under 5,000, and seven with populations over 5,000), 30 townships, and 68 cities (five with populations under 5,000, and sixty-three with populations over 5,000), represented in the returns, installed the new system of permanent registration. In these 110 units the total cost of installation of the new system was \$265,284.50. Of this total cost, \$105,283.68 represents the cost of the new equipment necessary to put the system into effect. This item will, of course, not

be repeated in registration costs for many years to come, for once the equipment has been installed the cost of keeping it up to date and adequate is quite small.

The total cost of re-registration in the state of Michigan, as represented in the returns and as pointed out above, amounted to \$267,668.81. Inasmuch as this figure represents but 88.4 per cent of the state's population, I have estimated the total registration cost for 1932 to be \$302,790.00. With 1,987,582 registered voters, this represents a cost per registered voter of only 15.2 cents. This figure is astonishingly low. It is due primarily to two facts. First, only 248 of the 1,738 registration units in the state prepared new registration records. Only 138 townships and villages under 5,000 population prepared new registration books. This is a very small number indeed and quite clearly indicates that sufficient attention is not being paid to the keeping of adequate registration records in the rural areas of the state. A number of instances will be given later indicating the errors which are possible where inadequate registration records are allowed to continue in use.

In the second place, it is very clear that the installation of the new system of permanent registration in the cities and villages of over 5,000 population has materially reduced the total cost of registration.⁶ One of the most striking bits of evidence along this line is the experience of the city of Detroit with the old registration system four years ago in which books were used, and with the new permanent registration system in 1932. This experience has been so well presented by the city clerk of Detroit in a communication to the council that I am inserting the letter at this point.

⁶Only one city of over 5,000 population failed to install permanent registration. This city was Lapeer.

To the Honorable Common Council,
Gentlemen:—

The new permanent registration system had its first real test at the primary election of September 13. In view of the fact that the installation of the new system not only invoked criticism to the effect that it would slow up voting and disfranchise many citizens lacking in educational attainments, but also that the operating expense would be unwarranted, it was thought the following analysis of how permanent registration worked out in practice would be of interest to your honorable body.

Instead of slowing up the procedure, it was found that voting progressed much more rapidly under the new system than under the old. It required but a moment for an elector to affix his signature and the registration records could then be located in the loose leaf binder in half the time required under the old system where it was sometimes necessary to scan several pages to locate an elector's name. Much to our surprise there were comparatively few people who were unable to at least sign their names and, inasmuch as the act makes special provisions for identification of those who cannot write at all, these citizens were able to vote under the new system as well as the old.

The convenience of transferring by mail under the new system seems to appeal to our citizens, as 2,390 have taken advantage of this method of recording removals since the September 13 primary, and thus saved a special trip to the city hall for this purpose.

The following tabulation of comparative costs of conducting pre-primary registrations under the old system in 1928 and under the new system in 1932 is self-explanatory.

ACTIVITY	1928	1932
Salary and wages	\$131,465.48	\$ 79,396.42
Automobile service	633.00	415.31
Stationery and supplies	3,317.36	5,824.58
Contractual services	3,582.43	8,742.14
Equipment	2,298.31	36,857.57
Advertising	5,609.98	1,005.31
Maps	1,199.11	1,104.46
Total	\$148,105.67	\$133,345.79

Total registra- tion	374,919	489,041
Cost per regis- tered voter (without equipment)	38 9/10c	19 7/10c
Cost per regis- tered voter (including equipment)	39 1/2c	27 1/4c

374,919 electors re-registered during the summer of 1928. 489,041 were enrolled during the summer of 1932 and, while 114,122 more people were registered this year than in 1928 the total cost was \$14,759.88 less, including the entire cost of files, cabinets, cases, and other necessary equipment.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD W. READING

City Clerk

The experience of the city of Detroit with permanent registration is not exceptional, for quite universally it has been the opinion of registration officers that the new system of permanent registration has been installed with a considerable saving as against the old system of registration books. The superior efficiency and convenience of the new system is undisputed. Of course, hereafter, with the system once installed, registration costs will drop materially.

It is interesting to list the costs of registration in a number of cities of varying sizes taken at random.

TABLE 1
REGISTRATION COSTS IN SELECTED CITIES

City	Population	Number of Registered Voters	Cost of Registration	Cost per Registered Voter
Hastings	5,227	2,604	509.91	.195
Alpena	12,166	4,957	1,220.61	.246
Mt. Clemens	13,497	6,215	1,146.55	.186
Owosso	14,496	6,129	1,012.40	.162
Marquette	14,789	5,787	1,375.00	.235
Monroe	18,110	7,833	1,211.00	.154
Ann Arbor	26,934	13,867	2,589.00	.186
Port Huron	31,361	14,070	1,600.00	.113
Battle Creek	43,573	19,575	2,410.65	.123
Kalamazoo	54,786	22,109	4,608.03	.208
Jackson	55,187	23,782	3,905.52	.164
Pontiac	64,928	22,404	2,038.52	.091
Lansing	78,397	33,978	3,500.00	.103
Flint	156,492	56,321	8,123.90	.144
Grand Rapids	168,592	70,522	11,274.01	.159
Detroit ⁷	1,568,662	489,041	133,345.79	.273

Average cost of registration per registered voter

.171

It can be seen from Table 1, below, that registration costs in Michigan cities were uniformly low, and in no case approached the high figures which were associated with the old system of registration books. These low costs, averaging for the 16 cities listed only 17 cents per registered voter, are eloquent proof of the value of using up-to-date methods in election administration. With the equipment installed, cities will now be able to reduce their registration costs further, perhaps by a third, for equipment costs in 1932 made up one-third of the total registration costs.

VI

Under the election law, county clerks are required to furnish the ballots for state and national elections, together with certain supplies. The cost of these services is defrayed by the counties. The county clerks of the 83 counties of Michigan have supplied the information contained in Table 2. This table itemizes the election costs which are defrayed out of county funds. The table also contains interesting figures showing the number of ballots printed for the two state-wide elections of 1932, as well as the cost of the printing of these ballots.

⁷It should be noted that the registration problem in Detroit is the most difficult one in the whole state, and one of the most difficult in the whole United States. Thousands of registered voters change their residences every year. Some change several times a year. In about two years 67,000 transfers were made. Actually, therefore, if every registration change were counted as a registration, the cost per registered voter would be very much lower. It should also be added that Detroit's administration of all phases of elections is surpassed in efficiency by no other city in the state.

TABLE 2
COUNTY ELECTION COSTS

County	Number of Ballots Printed		Cost of Ballots		Miscellaneous Items										All Other Items		Total
	Primary Election	General Election	Primary Election	General Election	Supplies	Delivery	Commissioners	Can-vassers	Re-count	Vignettes	Adv't & Printing	Postage, Express	Telephone				
Alcona	2,800	3,200	\$ 169.00	\$ 375.00	\$ 220.00	\$ 68.82	\$ 42.00		\$ 5.65	\$ 46.20	\$ 12.50	\$ 192.50	\$ 782.15				
Alger	8,475	17,700	173.00	394.10	336.68	75.00	42.00		2.35	130.37	28.82		1,060.82				
Allegan	21,113	36,595	439.08	870.00	716.58								2,312.83				
Alpena	12,650	20,000	236.45	870.00	281.30		96.00		68.00†				1,580.57				
Antrim	4,800	5,000	318.00	345.00	203.44	28.98			2.42				897.84				
Arenac	5,525	9,650	173.00	340.00	359.83	50.00	48.00	72.00					\$1,042.83				
Baraga	5,025	9,050	272.75	381.82	381.82	48.00							1,187.19				
Barr	8,385	10,715	201.14	474.26	537.79	16.35							1,314.09				
Bay	50,000	60,000	1,284.65	1,088.10	672.50	248.00	387.00	24.60	510.00	37.32		17.85	4,190.25				
Benzie	4,125	8,200	83.50	318.75	209.44								611.69				
Berrien	37,621	82,006	1,417.25	2,102.85	1,553.26				222.90		66.74		5,363.00				
Branch	15,300	14,000	360.15	1,086.40	1,131.83						48.82		2,627.20				
Calhoun	45,430	48,420	337.00	793.60	1,439.59								2,583.89				
Cass	8,802	11,058	190.00	493.00	224.38		13.20		13.70		2.06	1.35	929.56				
Charlevoix	6,965	11,550	316.50	476.55	581.77	42.50	73.60		1.25		27.83		1,539.74				
Cheboygan	8,500	13,600	305.00	522.50	1,396.75								2,224.25				
Chippewa	12,425	24,200	198.60	266.00	694.40	130.45							1,041.74				
Clare	8,450	9,950	131.78	223.30	535.28	60.00		34.80					1,179.51				
Clinton	8,560	11,780	245.43	887.63									1,335.88				
Crawford	1,556	3,100	63.00	135.50	191.96				3.75	46.45			1,041.74				
Delta	20,806	20,240	495.15	717.95	672.85			38.80		30.50			510.11				
Dickinson	17,450	14,400	430.11	842.25	593.00	96.50		17.80	104.80	30.50			2,161.43				
Eaton	16,466	31,500	329.20	669.60	355.25					95.14			2,118.41				
Emmet	7,500	7,800	164.00	496.40	248.76	57.00		102.00		108.81			1,775.71				
Genesee	108,390	176,580	403.52	835.22	2,328.76			180.00		254.58			3,828.93				
Gladwin	6,200	10,900	101.00	263.00	550.01	16.00		208.80					1,209.80				
Gogebic	33,925	27,170	2,101.95	2,047.70	666.33			454.50*					954.22				
Grand Traverse	10,300	21,565	191.95	647.15	506.65								5,336.58				
Gratiot	12,955	33,090	382.16	827.62	616.72								1,430.64				
Hillsdale	16,900	22,190	98.00	835.10	563.39				18.10	25.00			1,851.50				
Houghton	29,500	43,500	444.76	868.06	1,479.82								1,718.41				
Huron	18,000	32,940	422.25	717.00	701.94			110.00		56.42			3,026.25				
Ingham	43,100	63,990	1,081.83	1,600.96	1,776.46					71.41			1,841.19				
Ionia	18,400	16,375	594.80	388.35	901.71								4,459.25				
Iosco	4,000	4,000	185.00	330.59	452.89	28.50				98.20			1,983.06				
Iron	7,200	9,600	225.50	435.76	368.42	12.00				40.48			1,037.46				
Isabella	15,600	11,695	500.00	601.50	605.06			56.96		46.00			1,099.11				
Jackson	27,875	35,000	640.00	1,203.75	2,091.25	4.50							1,768.02				
Kalamazoo	51,150	41,715	2,566.50	2,628.75	313.74								4,130.21				
Kalkaska	2,360	4,100	145.80	247.00	162.89					323.89			5,875.92				
Kent	201,437	250,408	1,680.11	857.66									26.00				
Keweenaw	2,500	2,500	146.10	205.75	134.26								3,764.40				
Lake	3,500	3,500	124.50	21.85				39.10					585.69				
Lapeer	15,100	15,250	283.50	583.60	579.98								2,226.63				
Leelanau	6,640	8,900	265.60	536.25				149.62	11.80	36.00			40.00				
													1,447.08				
													1,109.15				

TABLE 2 (continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)															
County	Number of Ballots Printed			Cost of Ballots			Miscellaneous Items								
	Primary Election	General Election	Primary Election	General Election	Supplies	Delivery	Commissioners	Canvassers	Re-count	Vignettes	Advt & Printing	Postage, Express	Telephone	All Other Items	Total
Lenawee	28,045	26,400	522.15	1,491.00	499.90	126.70	9.00	147.40	144.00						2,157.15
Livingston	7,500	20,000	275.75	568.00								30.00			1,617.75
Luce	2,800	3,000	35.00	75.00		10.00		9.00				21.98			168.00
Mackinac	5,925	8,595	165.50	407.58	687.46						25.00				1,307.52
Macomb	29,400	28,500	402.00	650.00											1,052.00
Manistee	17,800	9,700	383.61	447.13	250.20			542.40		1.25		36.18			1,660.77
Marquette	21,990	21,468	507.62	618.31	466.78			30.80			88.59	39.74		17.50	1,712.10
Mason	12,980	18,840	103.50	189.50	563.54			58.80		3.00	20.21	28.17			995.79
Mecosta	9,295	21,200	139.43	636.00	599.01			34.20		7.33		42.76			1,244.11
Memolinee	18,742	12,757	988.50	1,520.50	733.99	60.00						101.99			3,345.75
Midland	12,000	24,000	308.25	458.75	1.81							52.83			1,662.72
Missaukee	6,050	6,125	171.00	420.00	334.72						69.34				1,244.11
Monroe	18,700	51,800	647.70	2,190.15	760.13		328.00	195.00					51.75	94.50	3,345.75
Montcalm	22,055	30,550	911.75	983.54	266.79		37.40							737.00	1,017.05
Montmorency	4,100	2,150	335.00	135.00	78.50										1,662.72
Muskegon	15,025	25,200	823.30	1,004.09				10.80							4,173.81
Newaygo	8,900	8,000	118.70	249.85	404.10							46.91			1,359.30
Oakland	79,460	174,140	1,434.17	1,240.33	3,553.51			377.50	207.00			20.00			1,874.30
Oceana	8,300	16,000	67.17	242.95	472.02					5.65					792.65
Ogemaw	4,030	3,375	112.25	225.25	246.32	266.76		67.50				26.11			849.90
Ontonagon	6,900	5,725	333.75	476.50	248.00						38.21			478.50	920.08
Oscoda	5,925	9,835	193.50	359.75	329.33	50.00	48.00	72.00	30.00						1,604.96
Oscoda	1,160	2,150	75.00	100.00	98.85			100.36*							1,052.58
Otsego	6,500	3,100	129.80	187.50	429.52										374.21
Ottawa	42,000	22,000	717.60	920.00	935.12							70.65	41.68		746.82
Presque Isle	7,965	14,650	194.80	387.75	449.55	20.00				4.60	29.75	30.00			2,685.05
Roscommon	1,665	2,000	88.00	81.00	213.58	59.45					4,582.15	91.43			1,082.10
Saginaw	40,950	68,350	603.75	1,705.00	94.32										532.38
St. Clair	40,625	36,700	598.00	474.98	1,581.60										7,334.65
St. Joseph	17,955	81,850	1,421.00	2,137.40	770.02						28.80	56.76			1,217.98
Sanilac	29,465	29,465	381.50	910.00	299.90			38.00			62.10				5,140.00
Schoolcraft	5,900	5,900	210.25	332.00	606.56										2,161.23
Shiawassee	15,280	13,000	432.25	650.00	401.50										942.26
Tuscola	14,650	15,100	462.50	462.00	606.56										1,688.81
Van Buren	18,000	20,000	239.00	721.50	1,521.82						14.60			313.00	1,639.00
Washtenaw	32,017	35,000	803.50	2,560.00	778.73	19.28						26.75			2,542.95
Wayne	996,000	786,700	33,337.50	21,398.24	5,244.75						1,831.55				4,142.23
Wexford	10,575	20,050	254.50	570.75	602.33						73.30			11,994.30	73,806.34
Total	2,606,895	3,051,177	\$69,646.59	\$80,058.38	\$52,685.87	\$1,714.79	\$953.40	\$3,426.24	\$1,316.60	\$100.16	\$8,183.07	\$1,724.98	\$122.87	\$15,916.18	\$235,849.13

*In Gogebic and Oscoda, recount is included in "Canvass" figure.
†Alpena includes recount in primary.

A close study of the data contained in Table 2 demonstrates certain curious facts. First of all, there is a variation in the cost of printing the same number of ballots in different counties. For instance, in the general election in Livingston County and in Van Buren County 20,000 ballots were printed. In Livingston County these ballots cost \$568.00, in Van Buren County \$721.50. In the primary election in Clare County 8,450 ballots were printed which cost \$131.78. Clinton County printed 8,560 ballots which cost \$245.43. Ballots cost Genesee County \$1,238.74, while Oakland County with fewer ballots paid \$2,674.50. Luce and Keweenaw Counties with almost exactly the same populations, printed 5,800 and 5,000 ballots respectively, which ballots cost \$110.00 in Luce County and \$351.85 in Keweenaw County. Such instances could be multiplied but they are unnecessary to prove the point that considerable attention needs to be paid to the cost of printing ballots. There is little competitive bidding in the printing of election ballots, and the absence of such competitive bidding results in high printing costs for the counties. Until voting machines are universally used, ballots must be used and greater attention should be paid to the cost of their printing. All of the counties of the state expended approximately \$150,000 for ballots alone.

The law requires the printing of enough ballots to supply each precinct with "*not less than twenty-five per cent more than the total number of votes cast therein at the last preceding general November election for the candidate of such party for the office of secretary of state.*" If only the twenty-five per cent excess of ballots had been printed in 1932, less than four million ballots would have been printed. The

figures show, however, that approximately 5,600,000 ballots were actually printed. This enormous excess of ballots over and above actual requirements in part accounts for the high ballot costs. Greater care in ordering the number of ballots should be used.

In the second place, the costs of canvassing in the various counties have little relation to the size of the vote cast. For instance, canvassing costs in Manistee County with a population of 17,000 amounted to \$542.40, whereas in Isabella County with a population of 21,000 the canvassing costs were only \$56.96. Oakland County with a population of 211,000 had canvassing costs of \$377.50, whereas Genesee County with almost exactly the same population paid \$208.80 for canvassing purposes. The job of canvassing the votes is a purely routine clerical job. If these canvassing costs are due to extravagances committed by the board of county canvassers, it would be a simple task to amend the law and provide that all canvassing shall be done by the county clerk. If this were the case, a considerable saving would probably result in this item.

In the third place, the total election expenditures of counties bear little relation to the population of those counties, or to the vote cast. Gogebic County with 31,000 persons had a total county election expenditure of \$5,336.58, whereas Jackson County with 92,000 persons expended but \$4,130.21. Lenawee and Monroe Counties with approximately the same population and popular vote reported \$2,157.15 and \$4,173.81 respectively. It is obvious that there is the greatest variation in the efficiency and economy with which the various county clerks handle election matters. The two following tables should make this point clear.

Table 3
COUNTY ELECTION COSTS

Ten Most Populous Counties

County	Population	Number of Votes Cast	Total County Expenditures	Cost Per Vote
Wayne	1,888,946	842,132	\$73,806.34	.087
Kent	240,511	146,744	3,764.40	.025
Genesee	211,641	116,319	3,828.93	.032
Oakland	211,251	107,705	6,812.51	.061
Saginaw	120,717	67,253	7,334.65	.109
Ingham	116,587	75,323	4,459.25	.059
Jackson	92,304	51,060	4,130.21	.081
Kalamazoo	91,368	48,216	5,875.92	.121
Calhoun	87,043	49,426	2,583.89	.052
Muskegon	84,630	43,404	1,874.30	.043

Table 4
COUNTY ELECTION COSTS

Ten Least Populous Counties

County	Population	Number of Votes Cast	Total County Expenditures	Cost Per Vote
Oscoda	1,728	1,465	\$ 374.21	.25
Roscommon	2,055	2,628	532.38	.20
Montmorency	2,814	2,690	359.30	.13
Crawford	3,097	2,218	510.11	.23
Kalkaska	3,799	2,640	585.69	.22
Lake	4,066	4,020	270.85	.067
Alcona	4,589	3,540	782.15	.22
Keweenaw	5,076	3,753	565.21	.15
Otsego	5,554	4,294	746.82	.17
Luce	6,528	4,314	168.00	.038

Finally, attention should be called to the relatively small cost to the counties of recounts. Although the following list indicates that recounts were quite numerous, it is clear from the figures in Table 2 that recounts under the new law practically take care of themselves and no longer constitute a burden on the public treasury.

LIST OF COUNTIES IN WHICH RECOUNTS
OCCURRED IN 1932

Baraga	Sheriff	
Berrien	Sheriff	
Clare	Treasurer	
Emmet	State Representative, Mackinac District	Emmet-
Gogebic	Judge of Probate	
Gratiot	County Clerk	
Hillsdale	Judge of Probate	
Lenawee	Drain Commissioner	
Mackinac	Sheriff	
	County Clerk	
Mason	Treasurer	
	Judge of Probate	
Mecosta	Prosecuting Attorney	
	State Representative	
Midland	Register of Deeds	

Muskegon	Drain Commissioner
	Register of Deeds
	County Clerk
Oakland	Circuit Court Commissioner
	Coroner
Oscoda	Sheriff
St. Clair	State Representative
Wayne	County Clerk
	Prosecuting Attorney (later withdrawn)

RECOUNT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE
Gogebic, Genesee, Gratiot, Kalamazoo, Mus-
kegon, Oakland, Mackinac, and Wayne
Counties.

VII

Approximately 50 per cent of the total cost of an election goes for the pay of precinct election officers. There is, therefore, no more important item in election costs than this one and, if any saving is to be made, attention must be paid to the rates of pay which are given to precinct election officials. The following tables show the rates of pay obtaining throughout the state, as well as the number of election officials used in various cities, townships, and villages.

Table 5
COST OF ELECTION OFFICIALS IN SELECTED CITIES

City	County	Population	Number of Registered Voters	Number of Precincts	Number of Election Officials	Pay of Precinct Election Officials	Cost Per Registered Voter
Niles	Berrien	11,326	5,298	6	36	\$7.00 clerks 3.00 gatekeepers	\$.047
Owosso*	Shiawassee	14,496	6,149	5	25 Primary 31 General	6.00	.032
Ferndale	Oakland	20,855	6,424	8	48	8.00 Primary 10.00 General	.059 .074
Ann Arbor	Washtenaw	26,944	13,867	8	56 Primary 84 General	.62½ per hour
Port Huron	St. Clair	31,361	14,070	15	90 Primary 96 General	5.00—12.00
Muskegon*	Muskegon	41,390	15,125	16	80 Primary 96 General	8.00	.042—.05
Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo	54,786	22,109	33	132 Primary 161 General	7.00 and 8.00
Jackson*	Jackson	55,187	23,782	20	80 Primary 100 General	.50 per hour
Flint	Genesee	156,492	56,321	66	330 Primary 350 General	7.00	.041—.043
Detroit	Wayne	1,568,662	525,613	876	5776 Primary 6019 General	8.00 Light Elec. 10.00 Medium Elec. 12.00 Heavy Elec.	.087—.13

*Voting machines used

Table 6
COST OF ELECTION OFFICIALS IN SELECTED VILLAGES

Village	County	Population	Number of registered voters	Number of election officials	Pay of election officials	Cost per registered voter
Copemish	Manistee	266	132	4	\$ 3.00	\$.09
Muir	Ionia	448	148	3	3.00	.06
Marlette	Sanilac	990	500	5	3.00	.03
Ovid	Clinton	1,131	372	3	2.50	.02
Deerfield	Lenawee	1,345	202	7	2.75	.095
Reed City Village	Osceola	1,792	961	9	2.00	.018
Northville	Wayne	2,566	1,556	12	10.50	.08
				(2 precincts)		
Rochester	Oakland	3,554	1,597	6	.75 per hour	
Laurium	Houghton	4,916	1,687	15	4.00	.03
Birmingham	Oakland	9,539	4,429	35	.35 per hour	

Table 7
COST OF ELECTION OFFICIALS IN SELECTED TOWNSHIPS

Township	County	Population	Number of registered voters	Number of election officials	Pay of election officials	Cost per registered voter
Grand Island	Alger	24	11	6	\$ 3.00	\$1.63
Almira	Benzie	241	176	5	6.00	.17
Maple River	Emmet	538	225	5	.35 per hour	
Laird	Houghton	1,090	445	7	4.25	.066
Burnside	Lapeer	1,263	774	6	4.00	.031
Handy	Livingston	2,032	1,100	6	10.00	.054
Sterling	Macomb	2,462	1,366	3	10.00 and 15.00	
Portland	Iona	2,674	1,653	16	12.50	.12
Port Huron	St. Clair	2,709	1,177	9	15.00	.11
Chesaning	Saginaw	2,744	1,486	7	.50 per hour	
Spring Lake	Ottawa	2,827	1,450	7	5.00	.024
Oronoco	Berrien	3,281	1,700	6	15.00	.052
Bedford	Monroe	4,578	1,809	11 and 14	.40 per hour .45 per hour	
Paris	Kent	5,527	1,817	13		
Summit	Jackson	6,754	2,873	25 and 27	.50 per hour	

The three following tables show the various rates of pay for various precinct election officials which obtain in the different cities, villages, and townships:

Table 8
RATES OF PAY OF PRECINCT ELECTION OFFICIALS IN CITIES

Rate of Pay	Gatekeepers	Inspectors
30c per hour		1
40c per hour		1
50c per hour		12
60c per hour		1
62½c per hour		1
\$2.00 per day	3	
3.00 per day	4	8
3.50 per day		2
4.00 per day	1	7
4.50 per day		1
4.75 per day		1
5.00 per day	2	10
6.00 per day		8
7.00 per day		4
7.50 per day		1
8.00 per day		8
9.00 per day		1
10.00 per day	1	5
12.00 per day	1	5
15.00 per day		3

Table 9
RATES OF PAY OF PRECINCT ELECTION OFFICIALS IN VILLAGES

Rate of Pay	Gatekeepers	Inspectors
35c per hour		1
40c per hour		3
50c per hour		3
75c per hour		1
\$1.50 per day		1
2.00 per day	1	16
2.50 per day		1
2.75 per day		1
3.00 per day	1	31
3.50 per day		3
4.00 per day	1	20
4.50 per day		2
5.00 per day	1	8
6.00 per day		3
7.00 per day		2
8.00 per day		2
10.00 per day	1	1
10.50 per day		1
12.00 per day		1

Table 10
RATES OF PAY OF PRECINCT ELECTION OFFICIALS IN TOWNSHIPS

Rate of Pay	Gatekeepers	Inspectors
20c per hour		2
25c per hour	2	2
30c per hour	1	19
35c per hour		12
37½c per hour		2
40c per hour	4	117
45c per hour		6
50c per hour		97
60c per hour		1
\$1.50 per day	1	
2.00 per day	16	3
2.50 per day	6	3
2.70 per day	1	
3.00 per day	17	44
3.35 per day		1
3.40 per day		1
3.50 per day	1	8
3.75 per day		4
4.00 per day	10	161

4.25 per day		5
4.50 per day		6
4.80 per day	1	
5.00 per day	8	75
5.25 per day	1	
5.60 per day		1
6.00 per day	5	17
7.00 per day		7
7.50 per day	1	6
8.00 per day	1	16
8.40 per day	1	2
9.00 per day		2
10.00 per day		12
12.00 per day		4
12.50 per day		2
15.00 per day	1	3

It can be seen from the tables above that there is little relationship between the size of the registered vote and the number of election officials. The greatest variation between units exists both in the rates of pay and in the number of election officials employed. Although the election law provides in a permissive way for gatekeepers, the figures show that these officials are not much used throughout the state. Only in the rural areas is much use made of gatekeepers and in those areas there is less need for gatekeepers than in the more densely populated centers. Close study of the tables above will demonstrate that in many areas of the state the pay of election officers is out of all proportion to the magnitude of the task involved. In a number of cities the local governing bodies distinguish between the pay of election officers when working in primaries and general elections. But in most cases the pay of election officers is quite generally at a flat rate regardless of the size of the vote cast. In numerous cases election officials are paid by the hour, a plan which is usually bad, for it leads to the piling up of unreasonable bills and, what is equally important, sometimes causes delayed returns.

Innumerable striking examples of extravagant expenditures for precinct officials can be furnished but a few will suffice to point out the need of attention to this part of election administration. In Grand Island Township in Alger County with 24 people in the township and 11 registered voters, there were 6

precinct election officers for each election who received \$3.00 apiece for their work. In Hudson Township, Charlevoix County, with 81 registered voters, the township nevertheless employed 5 election officials at \$5.00 per day each. Maple Forest Township in Crawford County with 75 registered voters employed 5 election officers at \$5.00 per day each. West Branch Township in Dickinson County with 54 registered voters employed 7 election officers at \$7.00 per day each. Caseville Township in Huron County with 87 registered voters employed 7 precinct election officers at \$5.00 per day each. A different situation was presented in Point Aux Barques Township in Huron County where the population is 24, the registered voters 21, and where 4 precinct election officers struggled all day with the returns at \$4.00 per day each. Blue Lake Township in Kalkaska County, reported in the census returns as having a population of 20, nevertheless has 27 registered voters and employed 5 election officers at \$5.00 per day each. Meade Township in Mason County with 44 registered voters paid 5 election officers at the rate of \$4.00 per day each. Foster Township in Ogemaw County with a population of 20 persons, a registered vote of 51, and with 43 votes recorded as having been cast in the November election, employed 5 election officers at \$5.00 per day each.

Nothing is more important in the administration of elections than the employment of competent election officials. Election officials in Michigan, according to the election laws, are supposed to be persons with sufficient education and clerical ability to perform the duties of the office satisfactorily. They are not intended to be appointed for partisan reasons nor to provide any outlet for the care of welfare patients. It is obvious from the facts collected

that election pay-rolls are largely padded with political appointees who are paid at rates far above anything to be found in comparable employment. Election costs in Michigan could be greatly reduced if the number of precinct election officers bore a close relation to the number of votes cast, and if the pay of election officers also depended upon the size of the vote cast.

VIII

A considerable amount of data bearing upon other phases of election administration in Michigan has been collected. In the first place, a study was made to ascertain to what extent the provisions of Sections 3023 to 3028 of the election laws have been complied with. These sections provide that precincts shall not contain more than 650 registered voters in those precincts where ballots are used, nor shall exceed 800 voters in precincts using voting machines. The figures disclose the fact that in the state following the elections of 1932 there were 740 precincts in which more voters voted or were registered than is permitted by law. In many of these precincts, as for instance the 235 precincts in the city of Detroit, the legal size of precincts was only slightly exceeded, and since the November election all of the city's precincts containing more than the statutory number of voters have been divided. In several other cities similar re-districting has been done. However, the remaining violations of precinct size are of considerable importance and of long standing. They constitute a serious criticism of election administration in Michigan. There is no more important point in considering the convenience of the voter than the size of the precinct. In 1932 especially, voters throughout the entire state had to wait in line unreasonable periods in order to exercise the franchise. This condi-

tion can be remedied by a strict compliance with the provisions of the election law. In numerous instances precincts in the state of Michigan contain up to 2,000 registered voters and in more than a hundred cases precincts contain over 1,000 voters. Violations are not limited to any one county but are very general throughout the whole state.

One very noticeable fact is that numerous precincts in the state of Michigan contain so few voters as to render secret voting impossible. It seems to be highly desirable that a minimum size for precincts should be set by statute and that Section 3021 be amended so as to make possible the inclusion of several townships or a village and a township into one reasonably sized precinct. It is entirely possible that, with the new system of permanent registration which is now in effect and with another change to be mentioned in a moment, more than 650 voters could be accommodated in a precinct. The matter should be carefully studied with a view to setting both maxima and minima for precincts. At present there seems to be a very general disregard of the provisions of the law.

In the second place, the data disclose the fact that, although Section 3032 of the election laws provides that there shall be one voting booth for each hundred persons entitled to vote in each precinct, in 46 per cent of the townships, 37 per cent of the cities, and 35 per cent of the villages this provision is not observed. In 577 precincts of the state the requisite number of voting booths is not in use in elections. 425 of these violations occur in the townships, 132 in the cities, and 20 in the villages. The failure to provide adequate voting facilities for the accommodation of voters has much to do with deterring citizens from exercising the franchise. With the in-

creased speed obtained by new registration methods, it is doubly important that precincts be equipped with the legally required number of voting booths, namely, one for each hundred persons entitled to vote thereat.

In the third place, the information collected discloses the fact that 11 cities and 1 township in the state of Michigan use voting machines instead of ballots. These places are as follows:

City	Population	Number of registered voters	Number of voting machines used
Bay City	47,355	20,000	22
Grand Rapids	168,592	70,522	123
Hastings	5,227	2,604	1
Ironwood	14,299	5,900	11
Jackson	55,187	23,782	40
Lansing	78,397	33,978	56
Mount Clemens	13,497	6,215	11
Muskegon	41,390	15,125	34
Muskegon Heights	15,584	5,000	7
Owosso	14,496	6,149	10
Royal Oak	22,904	8,367	15
Saginaw	80,715	31,929	55
Wakefield	3,677	1,547	3
Williams Township (Bay County)	1,866	780	1
	563,186	231,898	389

It can be seen that 11 per cent of the population as well as 11 per cent of the registered voters of Michigan use voting machines in every election. The city of Royal Oak offers an interesting instance of economy resulting from the use of voting machines. For average elections in all precincts having one machine, only three election officials are used. In the general election of 1932 four officials were used in precincts having one machine and five in those precincts having two machines, because of the heavy vote which was cast. Due to the fact that election returns can be ascertained almost immediately with the voting machine, the work of election officers is greatly reduced and their pay can be reduced correspondingly. In the city of Wakefield in Gogebic County there is one central polling place with 1,547 registered voters where 3 voting machines are used. According to the city clerk,

the use of voting machines has reduced election expenses to one-half in comparison with paper ballots.

In the fourth place, the study has disclosed the fact that many kinds of ballot boxes are in use throughout the state. These boxes are sometimes of metal, sometimes of wood, sometimes of wood and glass, sometimes of pasteboard. Many of them are home-made, some of them possess a double cover and some do not, and many of them are 30 to 40 years old. Under these conditions there is great opportunity for inaccuracy and fraud. The secretary of state might well be authorized to prescribe a uniform ballot box for all precincts using paper ballots. In this way adequate care will be given to the ballots after they have been marked by the voters.

Finally, attention should be called to the wide variations which exist in the manner of printing and setting up of ballots. The election laws carefully prescribe the details for printing ballots, and yet, from an exhaustive study which has been made as a part of this survey of over 5,000 ballots used in every county of the state, it is clear that many ballots now in use do not comply in every detail with the requirements of the election law. The point has previously been made that the cost of printing the ballots is, in general, too high. The point is now being made that the ballots, as printed, do not comply in every respect with the requirements of the law. Furthermore, even though some ballots comply with the law, they are printed in such a way as to make the ballot awkward for the voter to handle, or less easy for him to mark. It is likely that closer supervision in this respect must be given by the secretary of state. At the present time many county clerks communicate with the secretary of state to ascertain whether or not their ballots

are in proper form. This present practice of many county clerks might well be contained in a statutory provision, so that the proof of all ballots used throughout the state could be checked over by the secretary of state. In this way greater uniformity could be brought in the arrangement, content, and printing of ballots. The matter is of considerable importance because elections may well be declared void when ballot papers are not printed according to the specifications of the law.

IX

This survey of election administration in Michigan—the first of its kind and extent ever to be made, and exploratory in nature—calls forth certain conclusions. First of all, election expenditures are too high. Second, elections are not handled with sufficient care and efficiency. Third, steps should be taken to reduce the cost of elections and to increase the efficiency of their administration.

With these conclusions in mind, the following recommendations are submitted.

1. Contracts for the printing of ballots should be awarded only after competitive bidding to the lowest responsible bidder. If this recommendation is not sufficient to equalize the cost of printing in the different counties of the state, it will then be necessary for the secretary of state to approve all printing contracts or to arrange himself for the printing of ballots in various parts of the state.

2. The printing costs of ballots can be materially reduced if certain parts of the ballot are eliminated. It is recommended (a) that the present emblems which are now a part of the Michigan ballot be eliminated, and (b) that the number of elective offices be reduced to the absolute minimum. If these recommendations were put into

effect by statute and constitutional amendment, the size of the ballot could easily be cut in half with a corresponding reduction in printing costs. Furthermore, a wider use of voting machines would result in some savings in election costs, greatly increase the speed and accuracy of the count, and practically eliminate recounts.

3. It is also recommended that, because of the high cost of elections, fewer elections should be held. This would be possible if the terms of public officers were increased and if special elections were reduced to the minimum. The figures here given for per capita cost in two state-wide general elections are considerably smaller than the per capita cost of special elections. If no more than two elections were held each year in any part of the state, the cost of elections would be materially reduced. Serious consideration, therefore, should be given not only to the reduction in the number of elective officers but also to the possibility of increasing the terms of the elective officers remaining in order to reduce the number of elections.

4. The state election law should be amended to provide more definite restrictions as to the number and pay of precinct election officers. It is preferable to leave this matter to local officials and, if all local units in the state used the same judgment and discretion as is exercised by the election authorities of the city of Detroit, for instance, no state prescription of rates of pay would be necessary. But the wide variation which now exists, together with the outrageously high rates which obtain in so many units, seem to point to the necessity of some kind of state-wide regulation of the number and pay of precinct election officers. Furthermore, it is recommended that all local election authorities be made better acquainted with Section 3053 of

the election laws which requires the appointment of qualified persons as election officers.

5. It is strongly recommended that a greater centralization of power over election matters be concentrated in the hands of the county clerks. The county clerk should have general control over the elections within his county. City clerks or election commissions should have complete charge of all city elections, and should also administer all other elections within the cities, except that the printing of ballots for county, state, and national elections should continue to be handled by the county clerks as at present. County clerks should be given much wider powers of supervision in election matters over the election authorities within their respective counties. They should receive regular reports from all of the election authorities within the county in such matters as registration, and they should also receive yearly reports of expenditures for all purposes on elections. At the present time it is quite impossible for any central election officer, such as the secretary of state, to effectively exercise proper supervision over local election officers. By increasing the powers of supervision and investigation of the county clerks, such effective centralized supervision could be made possible.

6. Section 3021 and Section 3023 of the election laws should be amended to provide (a) for a minimum size for precincts, preferably 200, and (b) for greater discretion to be lodged with local election authorities in prescribing the maximum size of precincts. As long as dozens of precincts exist in which only a few voters reside, it will be impossible to secure secret voting. It is a travesty on secret voting to permit any number of voters, however small, to have their own precinct. Small precincts should be combined so

as to contain at least 200 voters. If this combination of small precincts works a physical hardship on voters in the areas combined, provision could be made for such voters to vote by mail. Regarding the upper limits for precincts, if more than 650 voters can be handled satisfactorily in a precinct, there is no objection to having as many more voters as can be conveniently handled. With permanent registration and with an adequate number of voting booths, a number larger than 650 can be conveniently handled in a precinct, and, although the greatest need at present is to relieve overcrowded precincts by dividing them, there are also many cases where local election authorities should have the power without violating the election laws to place more than 650 voters in a precinct. Detroit could make considerable savings in this respect, if permitted to do so by law.

7. The system of permanent registration now mandatory for all cities and villages over 5,000 population should be made to apply to the entire state. Registration matters are not now properly handled in the sparsely populated parts of the state. There are many evidences of irregularity and an up-to-date system of registration is as much a need for the rural areas as it is for the urban areas.

8. The secretary of state should, as a regular part of his duties as chief election officer of the state and in com-

pliance with Part 1, Chapter 2, of the election laws, prepare and send out to every election authority in the state an annual or a biennial form or questionnaire which will elicit all the information necessary for the guidance of the secretary of state in supervising state elections. If the county clerks were given the power recommended above, the secretary of state could then get his information from the county clerks, a relatively simple task.

9. The secretary of state should then be required to prepare an annual report which would contain the figures of election expenditures for the preceding year, together with other relevant data concerning elections, such as the number of registered voters, pay of election officers, size of precincts, etc.

X

Nothing is more vital in a democracy than honest and efficient elections. If the purity of elections is endangered, the whole fabric of government is affected. Fortunately, this survey has not uncovered many instances of corruption, and it is quite clear that Michigan is relatively free from the grosser forms of election irregularity which will sap the foundations of any commonwealth. Nevertheless, this investigation of the conduct of elections in Michigan points unmistakably to the necessity of taking effective and prompt action to eliminate inefficiencies and to reduce the present high costs.



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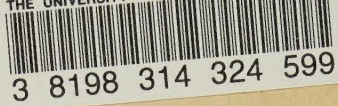
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